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THE MINISTER AND HIS PEOPLE

PHILLIPS BROOKS

The Faculty of the Harvard Divinity School provided for their students in 1883 six lectures by officers of the University representing other departments of government and instruction, as follows:

The Minister and the People: Phillips Brooks, D.D., of the Board of Overseers.
The Evolution of a Christian Minister: J. F. Clarke, D.D., of the Board of Overseers.
One Word more about Free-Will: William James, M.D., Assistant Professor of Philosophy.
Plato's Idea of Immortality: W. W. Goodwin, LL.D., Professor of Greek.
The Natural History of Altruism: N. S. Shaler, S.D., Professor of Palaeontology.
Vivisection: H. P. Bowditch, M.D., Professor of Physiology, and Dean of the Medical Faculty.

The first of this series was delivered by Phillips Brooks on the evening of February 21, in the Chapel of the Divinity School; and no one who was present can forget the profound impression of candor, insight, searching of the heart of youth, and self-revelation of the speaker's heart, which the address conveyed. At its hearing the effect of simplicity and spontaneity was irresistible, but closer study reveals the firm structure and steady movement of predetermined thought which give permanent dignity to the most casual addresses of Phillips Brooks. The lecture was fortunately recorded by an unusually skilful stenographer, and was published in the *Christian Register* of February 28, from which it is here reprinted with the consent of the proprietor. Its subject, its relation to the Harvard Divinity School, and its undiminished timeliness, appear to justify its reproduction.—Ed.

You will excuse me if I begin by expressing a little surprise and embarrassment at the audience which I see before me. Some months ago, when I had the privilege of conducting the service at the college chapel, the President asked me if I would some time in the spring give a talk to the theological students. I said

I would with the greatest pleasure in the world, and now I scarcely recognize the occasion. You will understand, therefore, that I came simply supposing that I was to meet a group of young men devoted to the work which seems to me to be the best work to which a man can give his life. I shall venture to address you all as if you were theological students—or I shall venture to speak to those who *are* theological students—and to speak altogether from the experience of a minister who has been engaged in parish work for a good many years. I come to you precisely as one might come who knew that a body of men had been engaged in the scientific study of agriculture, and who came as a practical worker himself to speak of the things which he had found most useful in his actual labor in the field.

I cannot begin without congratulating those to whom I speak upon the work which lies before them, and assuring them of the perpetual richness and growing life of that profession in which they are engaged. I cannot begin without assuring them that everything that is in the promise of that profession is more than realized in the actual operation of it; and also of my deep conviction that the time has not come, and will never come, when the work of the Christian ministry will be obsolete. I believe that there is every promise of a larger work for the Christian minister to-day than has ever been in the past. Otherwise I should speak in despair, if I spoke at all.

And yet one of the first things that comes before us, as we think of the work of the theological student and Christian minister, is the great changes that have come in the nature of his work. I am reminded at once, as I begin, of the largely prevailing conception there is of the difference which has come in the relations which the Christian minister holds to his people and to the community. As we look back and see the position which he held fifty years ago, we are constantly reminded of this difference. We are told a great many anecdotes of the way he stood then, of the prestige which clothed his position, of the authority with which it was invested. We are then pointed to the great changes that have taken place, in which the minister has been stripped of all that prestige, and has no such authority clothing the utterances which he gives from the pulpit.

There are two ways of regarding that change, both of which I should discourage. One of them is the supposition that there has come to be a lamentable deficiency, a great falling away; that the minister does not occupy that position which he once occupied. I remember a clergyman who was an old man just at the time when very many who are now becoming old were very young —I remember hearing this remark repeated, which he made to one who was just going into the ministry: "It has been my exceeding good fortune to have my ministry just at the best time. I entered when it was at its highest degree of prestige, and had the good fortune to leave it just as it lost its prestige and influence." It was not a very cordial word for a young man who was entering it.

Then there is an entirely different tone upon the other side—a sort of congratulation that that earlier prestige has passed away, and rejoicing that man can now stand before his fellow-man without any of the artificial discriminations that used to belong to the ministry years ago.

It seems to me that both of these methods of regarding the change that has taken place are superficial, and that there is something a great deal deeper to be said about them. We are bound, I think, to recognize that there is a distinct progress going on, and that the old position has a true relation to the new position in which the minister stands today. The old position in which the minister stood, clothed in a certain recognized authority which had its visible symbols, seems to me to have been the crude anticipation of the position in which the minister stands today.

We may say that the changes that are going on are in general of one great sort. Both Christian doctrine and Christian institutions are leaving off their arbitrary forms and showing their essential conditions. Things manifest themselves in their arbitrary forms first, and afterward show themselves in their essential conditions. Take, for instance, one or two of the Christian doctrines, and we can see how the change has taken place. There was a time when man was supposed to be appointed to fixed, certain, and precise conditions in the other world—the condition of those who were saved and the condition of those who were lost. It was an arbitrary condition, and one difficult to anticipate.

It was a distinction which one found it very difficult to apply to his own life. I believe today that men are looking forward to another life, believing that moral issues are to rule in that life as they rule here; that man's destiny is fixed there according to his nature, and not according to any arbitrary judgment which it is impossible for him to anticipate. The two worlds are thus brought together in healthier association, so that men live today in healthier anticipation and with a more impressive sanction of the other life than they have lived in the past.

So take the other Christian doctrines. It seems to me that the change we find in them all is the change from the arbitrary to the essential; the change from that which rests upon the will to that which has its root in the very nature of things. This fact, applied to the position of the Christian minister, must be the keynote, the principle that solves and makes clear the whole.

With that point in view, I want to speak of the relation of the minister to his people. I shall speak of his relation to the intelligence of his people, to the property of his people, and to the consciences of his people.

When I say "his people," I recognize that there is no such constraint upon the minister today as there has been in times past; that one of the healthier processes of the position which he holds today is the opening of his influence; that he has a right to exercise it today in ways which were not open to him in other days.

Let me try at the outset to give one designation or definition which shall apply to it all. It seems to me that what we want to say about the relation of the minister to the people now is that it is vastly more human and vastly less ecclesiastical than in the past. That is one result in which we may rejoice. There are certain relations which men hold in view of their common humanity—relations between men of different kinds of intellect and of different stations in life; and all these are in the very nature of their human life. Now I conceive the Christian Church to be simply humanity struggling forward to the realization of its own idea. I cannot conceive it to be something distinct from humanity. I think of it, when it has come to completion, as humanity come to its completion. The Christian Church has suffered all its worst effects and worst corruptions from separating itself

from humanity. Whenever the Church has conceived of itself as possessing privileges which do not potentially belong to the whole human race, it has immediately sunk into corruption. The true and healthy Church, separating everything that is corrupt from its life—the true Church is simply humanity beginning its work, and gradually forming within itself a nucleus of that which is ultimately to embrace the whole human race.

When I say that the relation of the preacher has become more human, it seems to me that I say that this process is going forward, and that the Christian minister stands as a man toward men, as a man in relation to his fellow-men, and not as the creature of some artificial organization. I wish I could make you bear that in mind as I go on. The relation between the Christian minister and the people who are around him is simply the relation between a certain man, put in a peculiar and helpful attitude to his fellow-men. It is not something organized by churches and councils, but is something rising from human nature itself.

What relation then does the minister hold with regard to the intelligence of the people around him?

There are only two positions a man can hold with regard to the intelligence of his fellow-men. He can either be the depository of truth, holding it and dealing it out to them, or he can be a fellow-student of truth, seeking for it just as they seek for it. These are the only two relations which he can hold to his fellow-men with regard to the attainment of truth and its distribution. We know how largely the first idea prevails in the Christian world today. The Christian Church is conceived as a depository of infallible truth, which it is to dispense to men who stand waiting with open ears and open eyes to receive it.

The first assertion of Protestantism is that there is no such depository of truth. It is a matter of deep congratulation that the recognition of this fact has been going forward all through the centuries. Every one of the reformations of the Church has been the dislodgement of that infallibility from some fortress in which it has intrenched itself, and the opening of the enlarged idea that man is seeking always the truth by the exercise of his faculties consecrated to the service of the divine will.

The Romanist turns to us, and says: "See to what you have

reduced the search for truth! Is there no being, no group of individuals who are authorized to declare certainty with regard to the great things which are forever pressing upon the human soul; with regard to the nature of the human soul itself, with regard to its relations to the great future, with regard to that mysterious event which came in the manifestation of Jesus Christ upon earth?" The Protestant Reformation, among historic movements, then shows how afterward men tried to lodge infallibility in the Bible, and to believe that there was an infallible record which could be appealed to.

The great point of our present belief is that there is no such infallible record anywhere, in church, or council, or book; that man has been sent here to strive after truth, not by any necessity to be sure that he has come to the ultimate truth in regard to these great final problems of the human soul.

Is that a dreadful or a welcome thing? Is it something that closes the gates upon man's knowledge, or is it something that opens them? It seems to me that for a man to set out to seek after truth, never sure that he shall find it with perfect infallibility, always sure that he shall grow into greater capacity to use it, is the noblest position in which a man can be placed in regard to the great problems of the human soul.

In such a condition as that, what is the relation of the preacher to the intelligence of the men who are around him? It is certainly not to stand and deal forth that which by his utterance has an infallible warrant. It is simply the attitude of one who, with superior opportunities, stands and guides his fellow-men in their search for truth.

The function of the minister in relation to the intelligence of the people is threefold:

1. In the first place, he must awaken their spiritual activity.

2. In the second place, he must give them the results of his study.

3. In the third place, he must lift their life to the higher tone which Christianity assures.

Look at each one of these three.

1. First, he is to awaken the spiritual activity, the insight, the real desire to know with regard to the highest things. When we

look around upon our fellow-men, we see that the one thing that presses on us most is not the extent of men's ignorance: it is their indifference. It is that so many men are wrapped up in the things of the present life; that to all that vast region which we know exists beyond they are wholly indifferent. To awaken the spiritual sense, to make them care for unseen things, to make them long for some sort of entrance into that great reality which they feel around them—that is the great function of the Christian minister. Even if he had nothing distinctly to tell of certainty with regard to this truth, the mere awakening of men in their own blind way to search for religious truth would be one of the noblest things he could do.

Mr. Matthew Arnold a few months ago analyzed Mr. Emerson; and the result of his teaching was this. He said that Mr. Emerson, although he might not be as great in some points as some of us thought, was great in this: that he was "the friend and helper of those who would live in the spirit." That criticism of Mr. Arnold upon Mr. Emerson was very largely criticized. It seemed to some that he had degraded the philosopher. It seemed to me that this objection was a melancholy sort of criticism upon the standards that we have in this life.

Is there a nobler thing than when a critic comes and says of him whom I reverence and honor that he was the friend and helper of those who would live in the spirit? It seems to me that he said something infinitely greater than if he had said that he wrought the noblest system of philosophy that has been framed in the world. The man that is doing the best work for mankind today is the guide and friend of those who live in the spirit.

Then we may be able to take one step further, and know that there has been one manifestation of the spiritual life in this world that surpasses all other manifestations. Whatever may be our theological conceptions in regard to him, we know that Jesus Christ stands as the supreme inspirer of the spiritual life; and he who would be today the guide and friend of those who would live in the spirit must of necessity turn to Jesus Christ and put himself in relation to his spiritual life. There is where the minister becomes a Christian minister—in the simple desire, through contact with the life and work and death of Jesus Christ, to stir

the soul and the spiritual life of man. The testimony of all ages is that there has been no such spiritual power as Jesus Christ.

That is the first work, then, of the minister: to reach the spiritual sense and to stir it to some kind of activity.

2. What is the second one? It is his duty to know something that those to whom he ministers do not know. Just as the professor in some department devotes himself to its study and gives to mankind that which he finds in that department, so it would be a strange thing if a minister, set apart to study a special work, had not something to tell men which they did not know. Not that that implies any infallibility in the Christian minister, but simply the education of a consecrated life in the highest things which engage the intelligence of mankind. The minister who simply stands before men and says, "You must be spiritual, but I can tell you nothing about spiritual things," is absolutely false to his function. What may we tell men in regard to spiritual things? We may tell them how the whole history of mankind has been permeated and filled with spiritual things. We may show how mankind has always done the best in intellectual regions when it has been filled full of spiritual influence. We may scatter such a foolish belief as exists in men's minds today with regard to the possible extension of the Christian faith around the world—the superficial objectors to foreign missions who are ready to believe, without any just comparison, that there is a religion on the face of the earth today that can for a moment compare with the religion of Jesus Christ in all its conceptions or forms, taken as one great whole. We may show how the history of the Christian Church is a necessary part of the intelligence of humanity today. These are but a part of the simple information, the mere instruction, which the Christian minister can give.

3. Then just one thing more. It is his place to elevate the tone of life everywhere; to bring it into contact with those sublime principles which are essential to humanity, which are struggling to the surface of human life everywhere, and have come to their best manifestations in Christianity—patience, long suffering, large charity, and, above all things, hopefulness. The perpetual tendency of the world to lose its hopefulness is one of the things which the Christian minister, by every power in his life, is bound

to resist. I can understand a Christian minister denying almost the essentials of the Christian faith; I can understand a minister teaching things from a Christian pulpit which I feel to be untrue; but I do not see how a man can take the place of a Christian minister unless he is inspired by a spirit of deep hopefulness in regard to the human race, always believing that man is the child of God; that his fortunes are fastened to the deep fortunes of the world; and, unless the whole is rotten—unless there is nothing which has an assured future to it—man, bound by the conditions of his life, being a child of God, must be a creature of perpetual hope.

Now when one says to me that I have lost much that the Christian minister in other times used to have; when one says to me that I am not able to speak with the authority with which a Christian minister used to speak, so that my life is gone and my function is useless, I turn to these three things: It is my place to awaken and to make active the spiritual sense of men; to tell men everything that I have found with regard to spiritual truth; and to make men hope with every possible assertion of their relation to the highest and divinest which it is in my power to make. Is not that something to fill a man's life in the Christian ministry—each man fulfilling it in his own way, but every man doing those three things, and so becoming a protest against the lowest in humanity, and a continual assertion of the highest?

Before I leave this first part of my subject, I cannot help saying that, after all, I myself feel that the relation to his people is not the deepest relation which a minister holds. Almost all the errors of the Christian ministry, almost all the heresies of the Christian Church, if we really retain that word in its true meaning, have come from supposing that man's relation to his fellowman may be superior to his loyalty to the truth. It is the reversal of that order again and again in Christian history that has led to the worst things that have happened to the Christian Church.

There was a time when men believed that they must assert certain doctrines which they only half held, because they thought that if those doctrines were not asserted men would go to ruin. Largely under that sense of duty and that impulse and belief was the doctrine of the necessary everlasting punishment of certain

souls asserted year after year. You went to a man and said, "What is the ground upon which you preach the necessary everlasting perdition of certain souls?" What was the answer? "Because if you do not preach it, men will sin; because if you do not believe that that is true"—for I may not charge men with simple blank hypocrisy—"if you do not believe that that is true, sinners have no sufficient motive to repent." I say that any man who rightly perceives the relation which mankind sustains to truth knows that this is an argument which had no place there. My business is to seek and find the truth, and to leave it to God to guard that it shall not ruin the lives of men.

Does not the same error appear also to-day upon the other side? When any man today makes less exacting, less earnest or imperative, any one of the statements of truth or divine justice and righteousness, in order that his fellow-men may be induced to do the less when he thinks that they will not be induced to do the greater; when any man pares down doctrine or truth, in order that men may be induced to believe that which alone he thinks they are fitted to believe—then it is sacrificing the love of truth for the sake of men. No man has any right to make that which he believes to be the truth of God any less exacting, less sharp or clear, because he thinks his fellow-men will not accept it if he states it in its blankest and baldest form.

I read an incident in a newspaper the other day that seems to me to illustrate this point. A tired and dusty traveller was leaning against a lamp-post in the city of Rochester, and he turned and looked around him and said, "How far is it to Farmington?" and a boy in the crowd said, "Eight miles." "Do you think it is so far as that?" said the poor tired traveller. "Well, seeing that you are so tired, I will call it seven miles." The boy, with his heart overflowing with the milk of human kindness, pitied the exhausted traveller, and chose to call it seven miles. I know I have seen statements of the truth that have been dictated by the same motive. Never make the road from Rochester to Farmington seven miles, when you know it is eight. Do not do a wrong to truth out of regard for men.

There is another point, if one may speak out of his own ministry and from observation of the ministry of others: men do

not *dread* to believe, men *long* to believe. The one thing that we do not have to do is to pare down the truth for man's capacity to believe. Give them all the truth: you cannot make it too exacting. The whole of Christian history has been full of testimony that you may claim your fellow-men by virtue of the very imperiousness and absoluteness of that which they have been called upon to believe. The old *credo quia impossibile* of Tertullian had philosophy in it. Men long to believe; and, while ultimately every healthy human faculty will reject that which is not congenial to it, you cannot help men better than by laying before them all that which is true, even in its blankest and most uncompromising form. Just as there are many men whom you cannot get to go down the street for you, but who would go half the way around the world for you if you needed it, so there are men who would not accept the truth which they felt had been pared down for them; but, when you put before them God in his eternity and infinitude and the soul in its vastness and mystery, then the power of belief, stirred to its greatest task, lifts itself up and does its work.

I pass now to something subordinate and inferior to the point in regard to the intelligence of men—the relation of the Christian minister to the property of those to whom he ministers. Many seem to think that he has the property of a large part of the community at his disposal; certainly of all that part of the community that is associated with him. If I were to do half the things with other people's money that I am asked to do every year, I should impoverish the city of Boston.

It seems to me that the minister is simply called upon to count his people as stewards of the Highest; not to be the distributor or almoner of other people's goods, but to make other men such, by the spiritual things which I have been trying to describe, that they shall enter into the privilege of doing that which has been intrusted to them in the highest use to which it can be employed. No man deals properly with a man until he accounts him more than his property. "I seek not yours, but you," said Paul. The spiritual life, the good of men, the good of the soul—that is the thing that the Christian minister is to seek.

The result of having something to do with that will be that

sordid coffers will flow forth and bless the world. It is the old story of Sir Launfal,

> Who gives himself with his alms feeds three,—
> Himself, his hungering neighbor, and me.

Give yourself with your gift. Something is gained if you get a man's five hundred dollars here and there; but it is not the work of a Christian minister. Let other people go and beg for money without the slightest regard of the way in which it is bestowed; but it is for the Christian minister to make a man know himself capable of consecration, and then to make him consecrate himself, which must include the property which he possesses. This, it seems to me, is the only definition which we can give of the relation of the Christian minister to the property of those to whom he ministers. He must work through the characters and natures of his people. Again and again a man has lost the power to do that work by the way in which he has been appealing to the individual. I will stand before my congregation and tell them of the glory of charity. I will tell them what a grand thing it is to give for God, then let them do the good for themselves, and go forth and give of their means; but I will not go to a man in any way that can possibly involve my personality, knowing that he will give out of friendship to me, and extort one dollar or five hundred from him for the best of objects.

And here, it seems to me, comes in one great function of the Christian minister that I hope all of you will not forget; which is that you must have such a large interest in great human necessities that you should be able to inform those that are able to give how to bestow their goods. The Christian minister has no right to shut himself up in ecclesiastical interests. He is bound to consider everything that relates to humanity, and to consider that a dollar that is given to the sufferers in Louisville is as consecrated a dollar as that which is given for an altar or a font. The minister stands in a position in which he can bring information to men that they might not have otherwise. To bring that information by the powers which he can wield over the spiritual life, and to make men feel called to give just as soon as they see that they should give—that is all, it seems to me, that the Christian minister has to do with the property of the community.

And, if one can again bear testimony out of his own experience, I can say that there is a wonderful *readiness* to give. It seems to me that the one great thing that we lack is sufficient information in regard to the things which money can be devoted to. The advocate of every great cause is apt to be dishonest—unconsciously dishonest—and to represent his cause as greater in proportion than others around it. That is the way in which the minister can stand between his people and such advocates, and show them the comparative importance of objects brought before them.

And now I pass to consider the relation of the Christian minister to the conscience of the community. The conscience of the community is nothing but the aggregate conscience of individuals. When we speak of that, we open a large and sometimes dark page of human history. We talk of the abuses of the priesthood in other times. I think we have no idea of the clamor that was made then upon the priests to guide other people's consciences. The Christian minister is not so much bound to refrain from asserting a claim upon the consciences of men as he is bound not to allow himself to be the master of their consciences. It is one of the embarrassments of the intelligent, spiritual minister that people are so ready to put their consciences under the control of others. I am sure if we could go back into the ages which we abuse most, the time when the priesthood set themselves over the consciences of men, we should find that the real trouble came from men and women who were seeking to be thus guided. It is the education of the great mass of the people so that they have felt themselves called upon to accept the great responsibility of the guidance of their own consciences that has released the clergy, rather than the disposition of the clergy themselves.

Just as soon as we talk of the relation of the Church to the consciences of mankind, I suppose we are called upon to make that division which must always be made when we talk about sinfulness. There are two classes of wrong-doing, two classes of sin. One comprises those sins which have no intrinsic good, which are always wrong whenever they are done; the other comprises those things which are harmful to the individual soul or are harmful to other people, and are therefore not right to be done. There are certain things that no man, under any circum-

stances or in any age, should ever consider right to be done. There are some things of which, if a man should ask me why I do not do them, I should say, "They are absolutely wrong." Of other things I should say, "I know, if I did it, I should be a less upright, less holy man; and I know that I have no right to do it." "Do you pronounce it to be absolutely wrong?" "No." Some things are wrong in the eighteenth century which are not wrong in the nineteenth. Complications of certain conditions may be harmful to the spiritual life—I mean, the best life of man. I do not use these words in an official sense. There are such things as the spiritual life of man, as the consecration of the man's powers to spiritual things; and when anything becomes harmful to them, no man living has a right to do it.

Now let us consider what the Church and the minister have to do in regard to these sins. In the first place there are some things which, as already said, are absolutely wrong. Slavery, for instance, is absolutely wrong: it is to be rooted out. On the other hand, when the minister comes to deal with a sin which has an individual and personal character, there can be no such absolute statement, and the one great, sublime function of the Christian minister is the awakening of the individual conscience to examine its own obligations, to recognize its own sins. I think it is not good that any man should accept a duty simply or solely upon the word of another man. Duty is something never done, unless it is done out of a man's own conscience. For me to go to the slave-holder and say, "It is wrong to hold any man in bondage," and to have him answer, "I cannot think so; but, since you think so, I will let them go free"—how absolutely unsatisfactory that is! There are always such things in the life of the minister when he feels that a man's own conscience has not come to have the fullest light and to work in the most legitimate and healthful way. The danger of the minister and the Church is that they should be satisfied with that, that they should be satisfied with something or other short of the absolute persuasion of the man's own conscience.

That is the position, then, of the clergy and of the Church with regard to those things which are absolute or intrinsic in their moral character.

With regard to those other sins that have grown out of the special complications of life, the work is not so clear. It is not so satisfactorily recognizable, but it is just as truly the work of the minister. Let me persuade the conscience of my fellow-man so that it works truly, so that he has really tried to do right, and I have done my total duty for that man. And when he comes to a different judgment from me, although I cannot see how he can do it, yet as a minister I may rest absolutely satisfied. When I have given him all the light I can, then I rest satisfied with the true independent judgment of his own life.

Now is there not left here a function for the minister? If our Christian Church, as a whole, could do that for our community and nation today; could call upon it and persuade it to cast away those sins which are absolutely and certainly wrong, and, with regard to all doubtful questions, to enter into a searching examination of them all and to act according to its best light, then the Christian minister would have regenerated our land. I do not believe that the Christian minister has a right to abdicate his function as the director of the human conscience; but it is important that he shall know that it is a living thing, and shall direct it as a living thing. Just as you put every power of growth into a tree, and then let it grow according to its nature, so with the conscience: we shall not bend it according to our conceptions of the right, we shall simply inspire it with a passion of righteousness, and then let it develop in its own true way. Here is a relation to the conscience which is quite enough to occupy your thoughts, your earnest anxiety, and your time, so long as you are ministers.

One thing more. Everything I have said to-night rests upon one great assumption, which we are anxious to have asserted in our country; and that is, that the people, not the ministers, are the Church. We quarrel with the phrase used in the old country, though not entirely unknown here. They speak of a young man as "gone into the Church," meaning thereby that he has become a minister; but ministers are nothing but the servants of the Church, and the clergy are nothing but their agents in doing the work which the Church has to do.

That was the good thing accomplished by our Puritan an-

cestors. New England would have been dominated and oppressed by its clergy years ago, if it had not been that every one of these stiff, stanch Puritans really felt that he belonged to the Church, that the minister was nothing but the servant, and that upon him rested the great responsibility, the real duty, and the persistence in the future of the Christian Church.

Then come back to that which I said at the very beginning, that the Christian Church, however we may talk of it distinctively, is nothing in the world except the first sketch of completed humanity. The Christian Church has nothing which is essential to its belief that all men ought not to be believing; it has no duties resting upon its members that all men ought not to be doing. Then I think we can see its relations truly to the community around us.

The majority of men do not today belong in associated relations to the Christian Church. What does that mean? First, that the Christian Church has not made itself broad enough to make earnest and true men recognize the ideal of their humanity in it; that it has been too special, too fantastic. Secondly, that it has a great work before it so to declare its human application that it shall commend itself to every man who really is in earnest in his thought and earnest in his deed. The Church seems to me to have that great function before it, and never to have had the possibility for the fulfilment of that duty so large and open before it in all the ages of its existence as today. Therefore I would rather be a Christian minister than anything else; and I welcome with all my heart those of you who are preparing for that good work.